

Learning Curve

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Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services
Professional Development and Training Division

Executive Director's Corner

This issue of the Learning Curve is dedicated to helping you better understand how adults learn. It has long been recognized that adults learn differently than children. In fact, two terms have been coined to differentiate teaching based on how adults learn (andragogy) from how children learn (pedagogy). Now, there are two impressive words to add to your vocabulary.

The father of adult learning, Malcolm Knowles, has identified several important characteristics of adult learners. Unlike children, who we hope are open vessels waiting to soak in new information, adults bring a wealth of experience and information to the

learning environment. Also, we know that adults are people whose style and pace of learning has probably changed, and that individual differences increase with age. Adults have a deep need to be self-directing and tend to have a problem-centered orientation to learning. Consequently, adults learn best in a setting where they are gaining new knowledge or skills that has some practical application in their lives, where the learning is designed to take into account their past experiences, and where they are given an opportunity to learn as much from each other as from the instructor.

Taking into consideration the needs of adult learners, David Kolb, another expert in the field of adult

education, has defined an adult learning cycle. The cycle begins (Quadrant 1) with the learner becoming open to the learning experience. In this part of the cycle, learners need to connect to the subject and prepare to focus their attention on the learning experience. This is a process of giving meaning to the learning and involves answering the question, “**Why** should I learn this information or skill?” The successful answering of this question allows learners to move to



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Executive Director's Corner ~ Continued

Quadrant 2, in which new concepts are introduced and learners are required to analyze and think about the new information. The question related to this part of the cycle is, “**What** is the information or skill I am here to learn?”

Once the new material has been adequately conveyed, adult learners move into Quadrant 3, where they have an opportunity to experiment with the new information. In this part of the cycle, learners practice applying the new knowledge or skill in a setting with coaching and feedback from each other as well as the instructor. The question here is, “**How** can I demonstrate that I understand the new knowledge or perform the new skill?”

Once the knowledge/skill is mastered, learners are ready to move to Quadrant 4, refine their learning, and show they can use it independently and apply it in other situations. It is in

the 4th Quadrant that the learners are prepared to expand their level of understanding and transfer their learning to the “real world.” The question they are answering is, “**What if** I use this knowledge/skill in another area of my life or work?” This quadrant brings the learner full circle and back to a readiness to begin the cycle again with a focus on a new learning experience.

The most effective learning experiences are structured so that students are moved through each of the stages of this cycle, in order. However, over the years, all of us adult learners have developed a preference for some parts of the cycle over others. This is what we refer to as our Learning Style, which is primarily determined by two factors – (1) whether we prefer *e x p e r i e n c i n g* or *c o n c e p t u a l i z i n g* and (2) whether we would rather *w a t c h* or *d o*. A combination of our preferences on those two

factors identifies our Learning Style as Style 1, Style 2, Style 3 or Style 4, referring to the adult learning cycle quadrant to which we are drawn. Continue reading this newsletter for a description of the 4 Styles, and see if you can identify your Style. You will also read comments about the implications of Learning Styles for instructors and thoughts on how to incorporate an adult learning cycle into electronic learning formats.

Best wishes from a Style 4 learner,

Nancy

Nancy C. Hoffman, Ph.D.
Executive Director

**Assess your
learning style**

Visit About
Learning, Inc.

Deputy Director's Corner

By Steven Berry

The ways in which an individual acquires, retains and remembers information is defined as the person's learning style. Often, mismatches occur between the learning styles of students and the teaching style of the instructor. The effect this has is the student's inability to effectively learn the information, leading to boredom, inattentiveness, or a distorted perception of the program.

As described in this newsletter, students learn in many ways and instructors need to be cognizant of this in order to adjust their styles of instructing, leading to better motivation and creation of a student-centered learning environment.

Perfectly matching your instructional method to each student's need can certainly be a tenuous task, especially when one considers that the ability to actually identify each person's learning style is improbable. With that said, a more effective method may be to adjust your teaching or facilitation method to incorporate all of the possible learning styles of your audience. This can be a stretch for most because, as with the learning styles of your group, most teach a certain way, one



Steve Berry
Deputy Director

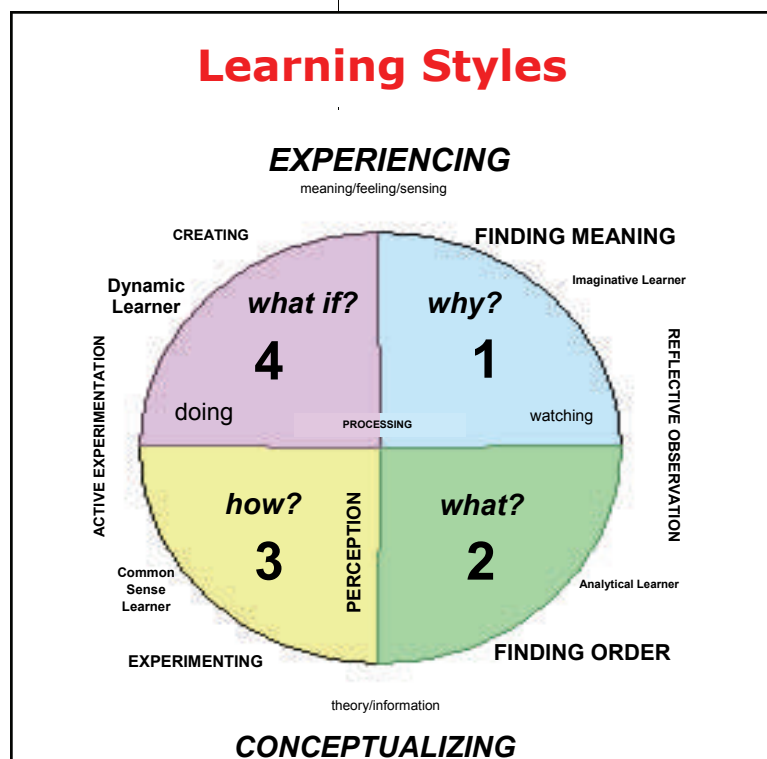
that is most comfortable to them.

For example, if your method of teaching has always been through the traditional classroom model that is straight lecture, at least half of the group (Style 3 and 4 learners) will find this boring, tune out, and most likely will not retain the information. However, if you were to follow the lecture with a hands-on group exercise that involves more of the right brain through creativity and innovation, the aforementioned groups would respond more positively.

Conversely, if your

methodology incorporated all imaginative type programming, those who need to get the facts and information of the lesson will be left out.

Incorporating the different learning styles as described in this newsletter into lesson planning is not a new concept; however, moving away from the traditional lecture based model of instruction is a stretch for some. Planning appropriate lessons that take into consideration the various techniques through which people learn will help promote learning and foster a more positive classroom environment, one by which collectively we can all achieve our learning goals.



Learning Style 1 — “Why?”

By Sue McGee

As stated in the Executive Director’s Corner, the learning cycle begins in Quadrant 1. Although the primary question for Style 1 Learners is “why” I need to know this; and it is important to engage all students at the beginning of a class. Hopefully, the classes you attend grab your attention early and explain why the information is important and how it applies to you as an individual.

For Style 1 Learners, even if the material being presented is concrete and unimaginative, they will perceive through their senses and feelings. Information is processed by watching and reflecting. To answer the “why,” Style 1 Learners will check out their ideas and feelings through the interaction with others.



After mulling things over and thinking about new information, Style 1 Learners will then look for personal meaning. The more that information can be internalized, the more value it will have. Style 1 Learners typically make decisions using their emotions and feelings. They learn the same way. As a Style 1 Learner, I look for personal meaning and how information makes me feel. I need to know why information is important and specifically why it is important to me.

Style 1 Learners have a well-established frame of reference and new knowledge must become integrated into the existing knowledge. These learners are imaginative and learn best by engaging in activities with others. To establish a personal connection they ask a lot of questions during class. Style 1 Learners value insightful thinking and look at things from several perspectives. In the classroom, Style 1 Learners want harmony and commitment from fellow classmates. They are interested in people and enjoy observing others.

Style 1 Learners as instructors encourage self-awareness,



Sue McGee

authenticity, and individual growth in students. They see knowledge as valuable for personal growth and insight. These are the instructors that look at everything as a “learning experience”. They like discussions, group work, and realistic feedback about feelings. In the classroom, Style 1 Learners exercise authority by using trust and participation. Style 1 Learners as instructors appreciate students who are supportive and share thoughts and feelings.

Because Style 1 Learners as instructors are interested in emotions, they may need to spend more time on specific procedures and planning for class. When you center on emotions, differences will arise and Style 1’s need to deal more readily with conflict among students and focus on objectives. Techniques often used by Style 1 Learners/Instructors are lectures, role plays, guided practices, coaching and demonstrations. Now that we have started our wheel with a personal connection, we can proceed to the other learning styles and discover “what,” “how,” and “what if.”

So, what do you think? Are you a Style 1 learner?

Learning Style 2 – “What?”

By Gene Farmer

Have you ever been in a classroom or in a training setting and something just clicks with you and you become involved, listen actively, and understand the topic? It is all because each of us has a different learning style in how we perceive and process information. Are you a Style 2 learner? Continue reading and see if this is you.

Style 2 learners are “analyzers” and prefer to learn by watching. As a Style 2 learner, you integrate observation with the knowledge and are interested in collecting the data. Your critical question is WHAT?

Typically, you enjoy learning environments that are traditional and thorough. Problems are tackled with logic and analysis. Sergeant Joe Friday of the 1970's *Dragnet*



television show typifies this Style with his often repeated statement, “Just the Facts Ma’am.”

If forced into a conflict situation, Style 2's deal with it systematically, dissecting the problem before coming to a conclusion. What do the experts know? That's what I want to know. Style 2's prefer a traditional classroom setting.

Style 2 learners who are instructors are interested in being accurate and well informed about their subject matter. They enjoy facts and details and lead by principles and procedures. As instructors, they like to encourage students who are outstanding and well organized.

Instructors who are Style 2 learners, should be interested in transmitting accurate facts and details. Organizational and sequential thinking will improve your style. As a leader of the classroom, you like principles and procedures. You appreciate students that are well organized, have things down on paper, and follow through on agreed decisions. Try not to discourage creative thinking.



Remember, we should never lecture more than 20 minutes without providing some sort of opportunity for students to process the information. The training should be an experience that can be remembered and placed into part of everyday work life.

It is always helpful to work outside your comfort zone. So, Style 2 learners, take some chances and act before your plan is perfect. Once in a while proceed on gut instincts and be open to trying new things, like maybe a role play.

Personally, I am a Style 3 learner. “Let me try it, I'll learn it.” I learn best by thinking and the process of doing. I prefer practical application of ideas, and down-to-earth problem solving.

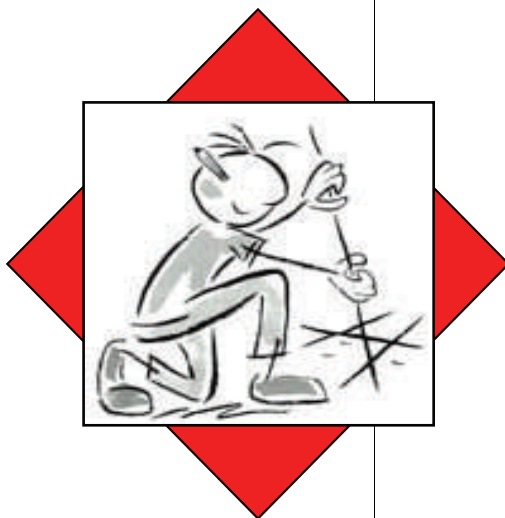
Does the Style 2 learner sound like it describes you?

Learning Style 3 — “How?”

By Phyllis Mills-Greene

The Nike® ad executives must have been thinking about the Style 3 learner when they coined the phrase “Just Do It.” We all know the Style 3 learner. The child who opens the toy box, dumps all the pieces on the floor, and begins without looking at the directions or picture is probably a Style 3 learner. Their motto is “how does it work?” While the rest of us are thinking and discussing the options, our Style 3 co-worker is getting it done. These learners are in their comfort zone when they know how things work and how to use the training information.

Psychomotor is the favorite domain of the Style 3 learner. The action realm is alluring. They prefer to



demonstrate and perform in the learning setting. The other domains of learning, cognitive and affective, are relevant only as a means of getting to the action.

Each learning style has strengths and weaknesses. The strength of the Style 3 learner is getting the job done. They jump right in to the project with little direction and usually get it right. Always willing and able to “do it,” these learners rarely see the value in knowing when the big picture or at least three-fourths of the picture is necessary before acting.

The four learning styles are not mutually exclusive. Overlap between the styles can and do occur. My personal style is Style 1/2. My Style 1 side wants to know why. I want to understand the connection between the training and the practical application. If the “why” answer is lacking, then my Style Two side wants to know “what are the facts” and “what do the experts say” about the subject.



Phyllis Mills-Greene

My desire for harmony is a Style 1 characteristic but I really like to have things done in sequential order and I always want to make sure the details are covered, which are Style 2 characteristics. Life experiences and patience is responsible for the blending of my styles. Now I realize that sometimes the “what” question will lead me to the why answer.

Learning styles can evolve over time or the expression of a particular style can change by necessity. The child who dumped all the pieces from the toy box may become the adult who removes all the pieces from the IKEA box and arranges them in a logical order before looking at the directions. This Style 3 person has discovered that directions can be useful in “getting it done.”

Might you be a Style 3 learner?

Learning Style 4 – “What If?”

By Dawn Pearson

A typical question of a Style 4 learners is “*what if*?” What if we did something extremely unusual to get to the bottom of a specific issue? Style 4 learners are viewed as risk-takers because they perceive information concretely and actively process it. Self-discovery is their way of learning by trial and error. They learn by doing and feeling and have a desire to apply what they are learning and enjoy carrying out plans and facing new challenges.

Often, Style 4 learners rely on their intuition and seek to teach themselves and others.



Dawn Pearson

To solve real problems this learner is innovative and likes to apply course material in situations. They also enjoy integrating experience into application and tend to be highly active and creative.

Style 4 learners discover knowledge independently and get excited by new and challenging situations. They are flexible and even enjoy change. These learners are natural leaders and performers. Style 4 learners often reach accurate conclusions in the absence of rational explanations. They enhance reality by taking what is and adding something of themselves to it. Sometimes viewed as pushy and manipulative, they seek to influence. These students like independent study activities, simulations, role play, case studies, debate, brainstorming, scenarios, and games.

Typically, the Style 4 learner dislikes long lectures, teacher-oriented classrooms, standard routines, repetition and drill, as well as assignments without options. However, they are

sometimes called accommodators because they easily adjust to new situations.

Style 4 learners as instructors are interested in helping students to act in their visions and encourage self discovery and creativity by using a variety of methods. Instructors believe knowledge is a tool for improving society. They exercise authority by holding up a vision of what might be and thrive on crisis and challenge. Students who can build on their ideas and are not dependent on them for structure are appreciated. To be effective, the instructor should step aside, making the most of opportunities for the students to discover things for themselves.

A Style 4 learner myself, I am often viewed as a risk taker. As an independent learner, I prefer to learn by trial and error. Role plays and scenarios are enjoyable to me. In turn, long lectures and lots of duplication are not appealing. I try to apply things I have learned to real life experiences and adjust to change without difficulty.

Is Style 4 a good fit for you?

Learning Styles and Technology

By Michael Helm

One medium is not a perfect fit for every learner. By utilizing the four learning styles as an outline, we can reach a broader number of learners.



Michael Helm

Each learner has a primary learning style and utilizes the other styles at different levels. Therefore, in creating an e-learning delivery system we should include these styles in the content development and the medium for delivery.

The four Styles of learning can be placed in a matrix with the available technologies to deliver e-learning. These four Styles are Innovative Learners (Style 1), Analytic Learners (Style 2), Common Sense Learners (Style 3), and Dynamic Learners (Style 4). See the chart below.

A textual learning delivery type can range from a simple web page to a document that explains a process, theory, concept or idea. This is probably the easiest type of presentation that can be created for e-learning due to its limited functionality and simplicity of deployment. The simplicity of this implementation greatly limits the learner's ability to comprehend the information.

Only a Style 2 learner will be able to use their

primary learning style and the rest of the learners will not get the most from this type of e-learning implementation.

The simulation learning delivery type has the capability to reach a wide group of learning styles because it

implements imagery, interactivity, and clarity of the message. The interactive functionality of this delivery type allows the learner to participate in the learning process and receive instantaneous feedback on their understanding of topics and processes. This learning delivery type is complex to develop and implement because of the numerous development methods and technological infrastructure requirements.

If you think about the numerous layers required to include motion, video, request, response, and tracking capabilities that is compatible with a wide variety of computer systems, you can imagine the complexity required to implement this type of presentation. However, this is probably one of the most effective modes of training a wide demographic area.

The collaboration learning delivery methods incur a lot of upfront development. But, after this investment is completed, the presentation is very dynamic and can utilize the other four delivery types. This adds personal interaction to the participants. If you have ever attended a webinar (**web-based seminar**) on the Internet, you observed graphic and simulation along with a facilitator leading the actual class. This type of delivery is the closest to actual classroom delivery and is only limited by the facilitator's and students' understanding of the system.

Finally, with all learning delivery types you need to track the progress of the participants to validate that the messages are accurately received. This requires a system that tracks the participants' response to interactive or static questions and determines their comprehension of the topic.

To provide our employees an effective e-learning opportunity, it is essential to focus on all Styles of learning and consider carefully the technological method used. It is an investment which has been substantiated in numerous industries that are now reaping the benefits of lower annual training costs, employee satisfaction, and increased productivity. We look forward to increasing our capacity to deliver e-learning within DPSCS so that we also can reap these benefits.

Learning Delivery	Style 1 Innovative	Style 2 Analytic	Style 3 Common Sense	Style 4 Dynamic
Textual		P		
Interactive			P	P
Simulation	P	P	P	P
Collaboration	P	P	P	P
Exercises			P	P
<i>P = primary</i>				

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[PDTD SafetyNet Page](#)

Learning Curve

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PDTD Mission

Professional Development and Training Division provides a comprehensive, integrated learning system for employees who protect the citizens of Maryland.

PDTD Vision

Committed to promoting collaboration, communication, and innovation throughout DPSCS, PDTD fosters a highly trained and professional workforce that ensures the seamless transition of defendants and offenders from pretrial through community supervision and ultimately to productive lifestyles, creating safe Maryland communities.

PDTD Guiding Principles

The Guiding Principles of the Professional Development and Training Division are to:

- *Assist DPSCS staff in aligning with the organizational mission*
- *Encourage life-long learning and growth for all DPSCS staff*
- *Develop leadership at all levels within DPSCS*
- *Stay focused on customers, both internal and external*
- *Teach evidence based content, utilizing adult learning principles*
- *Support all learning styles through creativity and innovation*
- *Collaborate with the various agencies of the Department*
- *Partner with external agencies to provide enhanced training and development opportunities for DPSCS staff*

Editor's Corner

Word Search

ANALYTICAL
EXPERIMENTING
ANDRAGOGY
IMAGINATIVE
COLLABORATION
INTERACTIVE
COMMON SENSE
PERCEPTION
CONCEPTUALIZING
PROCESSING

M	F	E	V	I	T	C	A	R	E	T	N	I	A	T	H
A	I	U	P	A	N	A	L	Y	T	I	C	A	L	R	Y
R	P	K	G	N	I	C	N	E	I	R	E	P	X	E	G
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S	C	O	M	M	O	N	S	E	N	S	E	M	P	M	N
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